000 at Aranka on the Lower Barama.

*177 175 [487] All during this early period of gold activities, the river system predominated as the route of transportation and communication. To move down the river was to go toward greater penetration of outside influences. Conversely, the Great Falls at Towakaima remained the gateway to the Upper Barama. However, the Upper Barama is often 133 487 unnavigable. The water height fluctuates greatly with seasonal rainfall. The low water level exposes numerous fallen trees and *177 175 487 impedes or prohibits river travel. Thus, the bush trails that follow along the river course were as important for transportation as the river itself.

There also existed bush trails which ran overland between the Barama River and the Cuyuni River to the south, and the Barima River *177 175 • 653 487 to the north. During the peak of early gold activities, a government trail connected Towakaima, located on the Barama River, and Arakaka, located on the Barima River. This trail was about twenty-nine miles long, graveled and ditched for use by mule and cart traffic. However, by 1932, this trail had fallen out of use (Gillin 1936:107).

*177 175 [489] Clearly, the river system was the lodestar of direction used by the early gold seekers. Also, with river travel and bush trails, internal communication and transportation links within this region of the North West District were more developed than links to Georgetown. Later, air travel eclipsed the river as the main artery of communication and transportation. The most immediate links outside the Upper Barama area became those to Georgetown via Timehri Airport. [439] The nature of the material exchanges which flowed along regional networks also changed.

a lack of preliminary surveying, the expedition proved abortive after penetrating only eight-and-a-half miles into the rain forest. An Allis-Chalmers caterpillar tractor, a trailer, ball-mill, producer gas plant, and other equipment were abandoned in the bush near Macav Creek. There they served only for the amusement of the Amerindians who made a game of competing to throw the balls the greatest distance.

In spite of this considerable loss, the Axel Johnson Company was not discouraged. Rather, new means were employed to overcome transportation obstacles. In addition to river and bush trail transport, in 1947, air travel was initiated in the area. With the prospect that large sums of money would be spent in the colony to open up this remote area, the Government built an air pool for the mining activities in the Upper Barama. Unassembled equipment was flown in by small aircraft and Old World became an established mining camp.

However, transportation was not the only obstacle to success. Operating on an international basis with prodigious expenditures, the Axel Johnson Company was closely tied to international money markets. In 1949, Britain devalued the Pound Sterling. With the international price of gold set at $35 (U. S.)[2] an ounce by the International Monetary Fund, the company could no longer profitably operate Old World. Despite the removal of a 50¢ per ounce royalty in 1948, and increased production from 286 ounces in 1948 to 1,858 ounces in 1949, Old World was closed. The death of two miners due to an explosion from a gasoline engine in the shaft, and after that the occurrence of a strike, also may have contributed to the abandonment of Old World.

The Baird and Dragten company was indigenous to the colony. It

175 damaged. Twice the shaft was repaired. However, after considerable
*177 financial losses over a period of fifteen months, the third inundation of the shaft forced Baird to close the operations late in 1969. Government attempts were made to sustain In Time mine. These did not succeed. Government influence in the Upper Barama River area was rechanneled through a structural reorganization which will be discussed later.

In any event, both of these companies had a long term local
[464] impact. Although incorporating negligible bush materials and Amerindian labor, the brief existence of the Axel Johnson Company
[439] increased the accessibility of the area. Wesley A. Baird's activities contributed significantly to local participation in material exchanges along regional communication and transportation networks.

*177 The building of the air pool already has been mentioned. Previous
175 to its existence, cargo was shipped either up the Barima River or up
• 653 the Barama River during short periods of high water. Men then carried the supplies overland to the mining camps. The Axel Johnson Company initiated a survey for an air strip. However, this project ceased when Old World was closed. Impressed by Baird's continuing gold activities, the Government carried on the surveying and finally located high ground for an air strip. In 1953, the Baramita Air Strip was constructed. The air pool served to bring in equipment which was assembled in the bush. At the same time, Wapishana Amerindians were brought in to serve as laborers. The completed air
*177 strip of approximately 300 feet cost about $80,000. For easy access
175 between the air strip and In Time, Baird undertook the building of a